

Control Arms Daily Summary – Final Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, 2013

27 March 2013

Written by Helena Whall

Morning and afternoon plenary

Conference Room 1 was packed this morning, full of government delegates and representatives from Civil Society Organisations keen to see a copy of the third and final copy of the President's draft treaty. The morning plenary opened at 11.45am, with **Ambassador Woolcott** promptly commencing proceedings by introducing the new [Non-Paper of 27th March](#). The President said little about the text, simply explaining that it was a "clean text", ie.; it didn't contain track changes and saying that "a lot of hard work and thought" had gone into the text. He said it represented "the best opportunity to reach a consensus" and that it was "strong, balanced and will be effective." **Amb. Woolcott** concluded by saying to delegates: "Take it or leave it".

The morning plenary was then adjourned to allow delegates to share the copy of the new text with their capitals and for the Drafting Committee to consider technical aspects of the draft. The Drafting Committee had a regional and linguistic balance and included: **Belarus, China, Cote d'Ivoire, France, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Romania, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the UK and Uruguay.**

The afternoon session was resumed at 4.30pm, when the Drafting Committee reported back on their technical review of the text. **Amb. Woolcott** opened the plenary, saying he was confident that the final text was of the "highest legal quality". He said the Drafting Committee had suggested making small changes to Articles 22 and 23, but he only altered Article 23.

Amb. Woolcott proceeded to go through some procedural issues. First, he presented the Report of the Credentials Committee, which was approved by voice vote and which was promptly adopted and then the **Holy See, Palestine** and **Kuwait** raised concerns about the Credential's Committee Report.

The **Holy See** said the approval of the Credentials Committee Report does not form a "precedent" for future United Nations actions. **Palestine** made the same point. It said the voting for the Credentials Report includes approval of Israeli credentials despite them being made in illegally-occupied Jerusalem. And **Kuwait** did not accept that Jerusalem is the capital of **Israel**.

Amb. Woolcott announced that the official version of the text would be released by early evening today and that translations in the 6 UN languages will also be available.

He then mentioned that he had slightly amended the Draft Decision so that it says: 'adopts the text of the arms trade treaty', and then he announced that due to the 24 hour rule, work would start at 3.00pm tomorrow afternoon to allow states concerned about the timescale to have sufficient time to study the text in their respective languages.

Tomorrow's proceedings will include: action on the Draft Decision, in other words, the President will give delegates the opportunity to 'take or leave' the text; there will then be an explanation of positions and interpretive statements by delegates; and then there will an opportunity for states to adopt the Final Report of the Conference.

He then asked for comments on this proposal, saying: "are you just going to swallow hard and accept this?".

Morocco and **Brazil** took the floor. **Morocco** supported the President's proposal, but asked when the text would be available in other languages. **Brazil** then asked the President to repeat the process.

The afternoon session was adjourned at 4.45pm.